

LEVEL  
ONE

# The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

DECEMBER, 2000

PROCESSED :  
JAN 17 2001  
GTU LIBRARY





**THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH**  
**DECEMBER 2000**

Jesus was born twice. The birth at Bethlehem was a birth into a life of weakness. The second time he was born from the grave - 'the first-born from the dead' - into the glory of heaven and the throne of God. -  
*(Andrew Murray)*

The greatness of God was not cast off, but the slightrness of human nature was put on. -*(St.Thomas Aquinas)*

He is what God means by man.  
He is what man means by God.  
-*(F.S.Whole)*

The first Christmas that little Linda learned to read, she was allowed to distribute the family gifts on christmas eve. According to the family custom, the one who distributed the gifts could open the first package. After all the gifts were distributed with loving care, Linda kept looking and looking around the tree and among the branches. Finally her father asked, 'what are you looking for, dear?' To which Linda replied, 'I thought christmas was Jesus' birthday and I was just wondering where his present is. I guess everyone forgot him.' -  
*(Anon)*

Turn a deaf ear therefore when any one speaks to you apart from Jesus Christ, who was of the family of David, the child of Mary, who was truly born, who ate and drank, who was truly persecuted under Pontius Pilate, was truly crucified and truly died...But if, as some godless men, that is unbelievers, say, he suffered in mere appearance, why am I in bonds? -*(St.Ignatius)*

RNI No. 1170/57  
Regd. No. TN/Chief PMG 675/2000  
WPP No. 379  
Licensed to Post without prepayment

**THE SOUTH INDIA**  
**CHURCHMAN**

*The Magazine of the Church of South India*  
**December, 2000**

**Editor**

Rev. C. V. Theodore  
C.S.I. Centre  
5, Whites Road  
Royapettah  
Chennai - 600 014  
**Phone : 852 1566 / 858 9561**  
**Fax : 91-44-852-3528**  
**E-Mail: <csi@vsnl.com>**  
**Website: csisynod.org**

**Business Manager**

Rev. G. Dyvasirvadam  
General Secretary - CSI  
C.S.I. Centre  
5, Whites Road  
Royapettah  
Chennai - 600 014  
Phone 852 1566

**Hon. Agent in U.K.**

Rev. R.J. Sleigh  
162, Sweetbrier lane  
Heavitree, Exeter, Devon EX1 3DG, U.K.  
Tel. No. (01392) 257692

*Cover Page: Anna George*  
*An Indian woman as Madonna with the child*



# What Would You Do for Jesus, this Christmas?

*The Moderator, the Most Reverend K.J.Samuel's christmas message*

**'Then each went to his own home but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives' (Jn. 7:53-8:1)**

A few years ago I asked a church warden, a retired head master to preach on the christmas day. I know he was a good preacher and I wanted to give him an opportunity. As he got up to preach he opened the Bible and read the above verse. I was wondering why in all the world he should choose this verse. Did I commit a blunder to give him a chance like this? I started sweating thinking what people might say after the service. As he started preaching my misgiving was dispelled and I felt that it was one of best christmas messages I had ever heard. Though that preacher is no more alive and he is with the Lord I always think of him with so much pride and admiration because of this christmas message.

Then I started again to think and meditate on this verse why the Holy Spirit was so particular to write these verses in the holy bible. All his disciples had a home of their own to go while Jesus, the son of Man 'had no place to lay his head'. Everybody went to their own home but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. This fact throws our attention to the alarming truth that

millions of sons of men in the world today do not have a place/roof of their own. It also tells us about one of the priorities of the millennium i.e. providing not only 'non-leaking roof' to



the homeless but being homeless is one of the alarming features of poverty.

What is poverty? To me poverty has two horrible faces. i. It is the denial of basic human need such as safe drinking water, primary health care, primary education and a non-leaking roof or shelter. ii. It is the denial of basic human rights. It is indeed dreadful to be in poverty because it is not only the lack of proper food and nourishment but it is denial of basic human

needs and human rights!

The situation in India is most alarming as globalisation has made the rich richer and the poor poorer. More than 60% of the one billion population of India are living below the poverty line which means majority of the population of our country are denied basic human needs and human rights. It is the basic right of every human being born in this world to have a roof over his head and no nation, no society, no church ever has the right to deny this right of a person. And that is why the CSI millennial synod has declared in its newly added 3rd chapter the mission

statement of the CSI. The first priority is the removal and alleviation of poverty from the Indian society. As you read in the bible Jesus was born in a manger in Bethlehem, a place where no human being would like to be born. He denied to himself all the glories of heaven, emptied himself and became a human being; was born in a most undesirable place so that he could gain all the human beings through his blood to make them the children of God. What we need in the church today is



this 'kenosis' this self-emptying, this self-giving, this stooping down to the poor or to the earth and this outgoing love, the real 'agape'.

I am raising a few questions here for us to think, ponder and act. **i.** How best a member of the CSI could participate in the alleviation of poverty in India. **ii.** What is the priority of each diocese in the CSI in the new millennium? The diocese of East Kerala in its millennial rally in April 2000 has pledged to construct atleast 2000 non-leaking roofs to the homeless in the first part of this millennium. **iii.** If God enables you to construct a new house would you spare atleast Rs.35,000/- or an equal amount to provide a non-leaking roof to a poor neighbour whether christian or non-christian? **iv.** When you conduct the marriage of your son or daughter spending lakhs of rupees do you help a helpless girl in your society or church to get married with your financial help?

There are thousands of girls who are overaged and not able to get married because they simply don't have any money for the expenses of their marriage. **v.** When you celebrate your birthdays and of your family members, wedding anniversaries and the anniversaries of ordination and consecrations spending lot of money, as a gesture to the poor, could you avoid luxurious celebrations, souvenirs publishing every year atleast in the early part of millennium and help

some poor people? **vi.** Could you think of the poor when you celebrate christmas in 2000? I'm sure most of you have already started preparing for christmas celebrations. What and how would you share the joy of christmas to make it more meaningful to the society?

I want to narrate a peculiar joyful experience I had in my pastoral ministry one christmas day evening. My parsonage was located on the main road and that christmas day evening as I was standing in the verandha looking at the people passing by the road, suddenly a very old lady was climbing up the steps to come to my parsonage with much hardship. She came and sat on the verandah and I could see she was so tired and exhausted.

I had not seen her before and I asked her what I could do for her. Then she told me, 'My son, I'm very hungry and I need something to eat immediately.' I went into the house and brought a big piece of cake and gave it to her and asked my wife to prepare a cup of tea for her and I watched her eating the piece of cake in great haste. In a few seconds she had eaten the whole big piece of cake because she was so hungry. Then my wife gave her a cup of tea. She gulped it down in a few seconds. Then with her shivering hands she cleaned her face and was smiling at me. I gave her also ten rupees as a gift for her. She opened her mouth widely and I could see she did not have even

one tooth. With her toothless mouth she smiled at me and folded her hands and saluted me and blessed me with these words, "My son, God will bless you and make you a great person." I know I didn't make any sacrifice this time. I had lot of cakes provided by my parishoners. But doing this act of kindness at the right time to an old helpless lady in whose face I saw Jesus when she smiled at me was an ever memorable experience and I believe that blessing is still following me and will follow all through my life.

Would you make during this christmas 2000 somebody who is less privileged than you joyful and happy? Will you try to make someone happy during this christmas so that Jesus would be happy with you? Will each member and each family of the CSI make someone happy with a kind act and gesture in this christmas so that the angels of heavens will rejoice with you? As you read this message would you start thinking of what you would do during this christmas so that there would be a smile on the face of one poor person or one poor family during this christmas? What would you do? How would you do? As your elder brother and servant, I pray that Jesus will help you to make some one happy and more joyful in christmas 2000.

I wish you all a very happy christmas and a very blessed and jubilant New Year 2001. Merry Christmas!



## A Word from Your General Secretary

After the *CSI Youth Festival 2000* where about 2,300 youngsters came from all over our dioceses, my heart is filled with great joy recalling the excitement of the memorable event. There has been a clear transition of responsibility and continuity to carry on the faith of our fathers and mothers. In the light of this event I would urge all parents, elders and leaders of the church to take the youth seriously as they have declared their firm faith and hope in Jesus, the liberator. Perhaps it's high time that they be given freedom of expression to articulate their faith through their singing, special worship services etc. for a meaningful community living.

The joint council of CSI-CNI-MTC met at Calcutta from 11 -13, Nov. 2000. Even on the 10th evening there was a unity festival celebrated at St.Paul's cathedral. The Joint council has presented the amendments of the constitutions for the prospective communion of churches in India which has to be approved by the respective executive Committee/Synod of the churches. Initially we have agreed to accept the daily readings of the scriptures to be used in all congregations while a common liturgy is in progress. Plans for the rehabilitation of two villages in Orissa in cooperation with CASA also have been in progress. I do certainly believe that this act of communion will not only bring these churches closer in relationship but also manifest a concrete witness in this land. We have certainly agreed to ignore statements made by Mr.Sudarshan, the RSS Chief on the *Swadeshikaran* (indigenisation of the churches) as the names of our

churches make it abundantly clear that the churches are Indian which is reinforced by our indigenous liturgies, autonomous administration, life-style, thinking and articulation.

I had an opportunity to go to Indonesia to represent South Asia in the peace process between christians and muslims wherein we participated in the dialogue with the president and other leaders of *Nahad Latul Ulama* (NU) Mr.Hassym Mushadi, President of NU which is the largest political party with 40 million muslims - that

because of the birth of Jesus must also encompass these blood brothers. In this context I would urge every christian family to earnestly pray for peace to prevail in these two tiny but powerful nations.

Once again after a breather, litigation has raised its ugly head in a couple of dioceses, which has been persistently souring relationships. This causes terrible unrest in the life of the church, distorting its witness and the credibility of the faith community. It is in this context that the Moderator and I with other officers

seek your constant prayers for these dioceses and plead in good faith with parties to the dispute to be open for reconciliation efforts. This request from the church officers is also extended to the CSI at large not to be tempted into dragging the church to the courts of law.

The process of litigation is not the kind of gift that we should give to our youth. Let us dedicate ourselves once again to the prince of peace and take up a pledge to be channels of his peace. May the first christmas in the new millennium be a real celebration of *shalom*, the peace that passes all understanding. As we once again celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ may we be constantly reminded that the peace brought by him, foretold by the prophets, sung by the angels, witnessed to by Simeon and experienced by generations be the gift of life the churches give to the society at large in our land. I wish you all a very merry christmas and a peaceful new year.



General Secretary & The Treasurer seen with the youth gathering

resulted in receiving an assurance from the dominant muslim community, of restraining from any act of violence. During the same time the decade of overcoming violence (DOV) was launched by the WCC where both the muslim and christian leaders of Indonesia participated meaningfully. As a team the christian leaders were also welcomed into different muslim institutions.

The ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine does certainly become a matter serious concern. We are entering into the joyous christmas celebrations all over the world but it is unfortunate that the land of its origin does not recognize the prince of peace as one who brought celestial peace. The peace that we celebrate

G.Dyvasirvadam



## Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

It is curious if not amusing that the RSS leadership should, off and on, call for indianisation or '*Swadeshikaran*' of the Indian Church. It is equally mystifying that the organisation should advise the religious minorities in the country to accept Ram and Krishna as the forefathers of all Indians and in the same vein dictate to the people of the nation 'to admit' that all Indians have Ram and Krishna in their blood! What is it if it is not the fascist mischief of the RSS that operates in the vain hope of flushing christians out of the country for it fancies it is an easy job to do so because after all they (the christians) constitute less than three per-cent of the total population.

The grand idea that 'all Indians have Ram and Krishna in their blood' virtually cuts a divisive line within Hinduism itself breaking them into opposing segments philosophically, socially, racially and politically too. Ram and Krishna are not mere heroes of the epics created by Valmiki and Vedvyas respectively but they are the venerable Avatars of Vishnu from whom the distinct sect Vaishnavism derives its name. There is the other equally large branch of Hinduism which does not accept the concept of Avatar.

Again, one is at a loss to understand the motive behind the RSS's advice to christians to

indianise the Church not realising that the Church in India is Indian already for the past two millennia, much earlier than the philosophically systematized Hinduism came to be, not to speak of *Hindutva*. Christianity reached India long before it reached Europe. The fact that the christian missionaries started coming to India from across the seas some 300 years ago to share Christ's message with the people in India does not by any magic make the Indian Christians European or American. Any civilized and right thinking people or individuals would not try to negate the fact that conversion by conviction is the personal concern of every human individually or collectively. There should be something unusual about any faith that closes its doors for a two way entry, way in and way out, without any fear or apprehension. Opposing conversions cannot be held as a healthy sign on the part of any religion, but it can only be construed as a symptom of a fear psychosis embedded deep in its subconscious which might eventually erupt into violence any moment.

The decades old trend of Hindu *sanyasins* making inroads into western communities, particularly North American, converting quite a number to Hinduism and building Hindu temples in places is not unknown to the world. But they (the westerners) in their graciousness do not make a hue and cry over the conversion activi-

ties happening there. But here it is sadly different. Our Prime Minister Mr. Vajpayee while he was in US recently declared himself a '*Swayamsevak*' which raised many brows here at home, and in the same breath he made a gift of the image of Ganesh to the President Mr. Clinton. The Americans did not see any string attached to the gift of a Hindu deity made to the constitutional head of their state. On the other hand they joined the celebration of *Deepavali*, the festival of lights, unmindful of its links to Hindu mythology. With the same attitude christians in India as well could celebrate the festival of lights with gaiety and fun putting christian content into it without reserving the merriment to Christmas alone.

A question however lingers in one's mind. What does the RSS expect the Indian Christians to do when it calls for the indianisation of the Church? Does it intend the Church should put weapons of violence such as a spear in the hands of Jesus, a *trisul* in the hands of Mother Mary and bows and arrows in the hands of the Apostles? -- P.A. SATHIA-SATCHY Chennai-59.

### CHURCH OF SOUTH INDIA FESTIVAL CONCERTS

We invite you all to join us in  
celebrating the

#### Festival of Incarnation

CSI Centre, 5, Whites Rd.  
Chennai-600 014.

Jubilee Auditorium

Saturday, December 9, 6.30 p.m.



# MILLENNIUM CHRISTMAS

- J. Jayakiran Sebastian, Associate Professor of Theology, United Theological College, Bangalore

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." (*John 1:5*)

## Introduction: An Ancient Story in Today's Context

All the hype and the excitement that was associated with the arrival of the year Y2K is gradually fading. The year is slowly but relentlessly drawing to an end and the routine has replaced the excitement. The recognition that perhaps the only major thing that changed at the beginning of this year was the wall calendar, has acted as a dampener even on those commercial interests that were keen to promote the year 2001 as the "actual" beginning of the third millennium. There seems to be a feeling of spiritual fatigue in the air, a fatigue caused by heightened expectations and unpalatable realities.

The year that is drawing to an end is also a year that has witnessed serious and provocative challenges to the very existence of the christian community in India. The question regarding the loyalty and identity of christians has been raised in a crude, yet dangerous, manner. There are systematic attempts to thwart and distort the attempts by responsible voices from within the community to clear the air. The shrill hyperbole calling for a "debate" on several issues that are at the core of the christian self-definition is more a call to listen to a harangue or shrill accusa-

tions rather than a genuine attempt to try and understand the other.

It is in this context that we need to look again at the old, familiar passages from the Bible, and come to an understanding of what it means to celebrate christmas in this year of our Lord 2000. An important corrective that needs to be entered this year is that we have to recognize the artificiality of our time schemes. In a context where one does not know the exact date of birth of Jesus it would be foolish on our part to try and schematize our understanding of history and build theological interpretations upon this base of an artificial calendar which came into existence in its present form hundreds of years after the birth of the baby of Bethlehem. What we celebrate on the 25th of December is not the "when" of the birth, but the reality that in order that human beings could be opened to the possibility of the recognition of their divine destiny, the divine became human and dwelt among us. The testimony of John is one of the ways through which we are empowered to re-examine the contemporary relevance of the message of the incarnation. There are three aspects that we need to take into consideration:

### Beyond the immediate to the integrated:

The testimony about the light

shining in the darkness is a challenge and a warning to those who would like to privatise the light and claim that it is their personal possession. Although the light is available to those who grope in darkness, there are very many who prefer the darkness to light. For some it is more profitable to deal with the darkness, or to deal in darkness, rather than to take the side of, and be illumined by, the light. There is profit to be made in darkness, whereas the works of light may or may not bring the desired benefit. It is in this context that the affirmation is made that although the darkness would have liked to triumph over the light, in order that it may reign unchecked and uncontrolled, the darkness has not been able to extinguish or to quench this light. The light illumines the reality that although the immediate needs, or one's immediate desires may seem to be attractive and fulfilling, there is a call to move beyond this to recognize the glimpses of a more integrated reality and existence. The light seeks to illumine not just a private space or a corner, but seeks to push the frontiers of darkness ever farther away, so that our lives and the life of the world may be bathed in the aura of this light. This is possible only if one can move beyond the immediate cares and concerns to a state of interdependent and inter personal living that seeks to integrate and



bring together the scattered fragments of broken lives, so that such lives can be mended and reconstructed in order that our mutual interdependence can be highlighted.

This christmas, we need to look beyond the immediate, beyond the immediacies of our joys and sorrows, beyond the immediacies of our self-sufficiency, beyond the immediacy of our hypocrisy, beyond the immediacies of our superficiality, to the recognition that the light came into the world in order that it may cast light on a wider and more integrated way of life and journey of faith than what we are perhaps prepared to allow or have been accustomed to.

### **Beyond isolation toward incorporation**

The coming of Jesus is a call to move beyond the private and the personal, beyond the isolation of a privatized existence towards a more integrated existence. There has been a strong tendency in certain forms of the expression of christian faith to overstress the personal aspect of our relationship to the message of Jesus and underline a highly personalized view of salvation. While the personal aspect of faith may be an important component of the journey to the beyond, one must not lose sight of the reality that the personal ought to find fulfillment in the wider body. Certain images of

the Bible are striking in their clarity: the body and its members; the building and its components. The light is perhaps a bit too indiscriminate for our liking. We would perhaps have been happy to be recognized as the custodians and guardians of this light, controlling the direction where the rays fall, and the area that is illumined. The light has a strange way of behaving. It is not afraid of the dark, but seeks to incorporate more and more of the areas of darkness. Nothing seems to be beyond its penetrative reach. It is not content to remain in isolation but constantly seeks incorporation.

This christmas, the challenge before us is that of moving be-

### **WANTED**

The United Theological College, Bangalore, calls for applications from qualified candidates for the following posts:

1. Lecturer/Associate Professor/Professor in Christian Ethics (in the Dept. of Theology and Ethics).
2. Lecturer/Associate Professor/Professor in History of Christianity,
3. Lecturer/Associate Professor/Professor in the Department of Christian Ministry (with focus on Homiletics, and ability to handle related Christian Ministry subjects at the B. D., level).
4. Lecturer/Associate Professor/Professor in the Department of Religion and Culture with focus on Hinduism and/or Islam.

#### **Qualification:**

An earned doctorate in the respective fields of specialization, preferably with teaching experience at the post-graduate level. Application should include curriculum vitae with a bibliography of published works and, at least, two selected samples of scholarly publications as well as xerox copies of the degree certificates. Applications may be sent on or before January 31, 2001 to:

**The Principal,  
The United Theological College,  
Post Box 4613,  
63 Miller's Road, Bangalore - 560 046,  
India.  
Fax: 91-80-3330015.**

**O.V.Jathanna  
Principal**



yond narrow and petty individualism, beyond spiritual hibernation and miserly tight-fistedness towards a form of existence that seeks to enlarge the horizon of those who claim to belong to the household of faith.

### **Beyond indifference toward involvement:**

One notices that there is an increasing tendency to be content with very little, although much has been promised and much has been given. Such an attitude leads to a kind of cold and cynical indifference to questions of faith and order. There is a quick and casual dismissal of some of the deeper questions of the living reality of our faith and belief. Indifference leads to hollow superficiality where one is not prepared to commit oneself to the task of wrestling with the truth of God, but the desire to have pre-packaged ready-made answers to the real or imagined challenges of life in contemporary India. This superficiality manifests itself in one's attitude to the structures of the church and society, to the

study of the Bible, to the quest for easy power and the authority of over-lordship, and in the lack of sensitivity to those whom society, for its own benefits, has consigned to the fringes. Those at the fringes, who are even denied fringe benefits are indispensable for the maintenance of the lifestyles of those for whom the fringes provide nourishment and leisure. The light, which could have remained in the splendor of God's glory bright, has come into the world at the fringes in order to indicate that there cannot be the objects of indifference but have been found worthy to be incorporated into the promise of the kingdom.

This Christmas, we are called upon to reflect and act in a manner worthy of those who claim to have glimpsed at least a part of the vision revealed by the light, a vision that forces us to move beyond easy indifference, towards practical involvement in the life and the struggles of those forced to dwell at the fringes. The true light that illumines the reality of who we are, and indi-

cates to us the possibility of who we can be, is a light whose radiance is the result of divine choice, a choice that humankind deserves better, and the conviction that if this choice had to be made manifest, then the price of that choice would have to be paid, even if it meant that the forces of darkness would seem to have gained the upper hand, in the darkness of the cross.

Moving beyond indifference towards involvement, beyond isolation to incorporation, beyond the immediate to the integrated would involve for us the recognition that the ancient story continues to cast its spell on us, waving anew the tapestry of our faith, holding up to scrutiny, aspects of our life that we would like to ignore, for it is in and through God's light that we see light.

May the light of Christmas fill our hearts and minds anew with the knowledge and power of Jesus, the one who claimed before a disbelieving people that he, indeed, was the light of the world.

### **ALL INDIA CHURCH SUPPLIERS**

**38, Main Road Perumalpuram, Tirunelveli - 627 007,**

**Tamil Nadu.**

**Ph: 0462-532815, 533437 Fax: 0462 - 530488**

- \* Mfg. & Exporters of all types of Church Articles and Bells for over 75 years.
- Church Bell weighing from 30 Kg to 1000 Kg along with swinging accessories.
- Chalice, Ciborium, Monstrance, Altar Cross, Processional Cross, Candle Stand, Eagle Lectern, Sanctuary Lamp etc.
- Specialist in making Brass Alter Railing as per customer specification.
- Sacramental grape syrup & wafers.
- We undertake erection of bells, recasting of defective bells, repolishing, repairing and regilding of Church vessels.



# EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP OF INDIA

## STATEMENT ON MISSION LANGUAGE

The national consultation of the Theological Commission of the Evangelical Fellowship of India on mission language and Biblical metaphor met at South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies, Bangalore, October 4 - 7, 2000, with representatives from across India.

We accept the need to be sensitive in our language to show consideration for others and how they may perceive our words. This applies to what we say or write for any medium at all, including letters, reports, songs, prayers, and material on the Internet, for the boundaries between in-house and public domain are disappearing.

### Offensive Terms

We acknowledge that some churches and christian missions have borrowed offensive secular terms, and over-extended military metaphors from the Bible. For example, the bible uses "soldier" to illustrate how we should obey God, but not to encourage an aggressive attitude to other people. While we want to avoid inappropriate military language, we profit from Bible metaphors that call us to respect and obey God and those in authority.

However, warfare words such as "army", "advance", "attack", "battle", "campaign", "crusade", "conquer", "commandos", "enemy", "foe", "forces", "marching order", "mobilise", "soldier", "tactical plan", "target", "victory", "weapons", have been wrongly used as motivational tools for missions. Other offensive words include "pagan", "darkness", and "heathen". Emphasis on such vocabulary is unloving, inappropriate and counter-productive. Language that excludes women also offends. We must continuously examine both our attitudes and our language.

### The Danger of Labelling

We believe evil in all its forms is in conflict with the rule of God. Evil is our enemy and not people. We object to language that can wrongly label people as enemies, or appear aggressive. Although the gospel call to follow Christ may cause offence and be opposed by some, we much take care to avoid vocabulary that can be distorted to justify that opposition.

### Our Motivation

Warfare language is not our motivation for mission. We share Christ because we experience the love and grace of

God, leading us to worship and proclamation. As God loves all people without discrimination, so should we. We respect and serve all in words, attitudes and actions, regardless of caste, race, class, creed and gender.

### A Call to Christians

We call upon our brothers and sisters to take care not to offend with words. We also ask the church outside India to be aware that inappropriate mission language not only offends people of other faiths, but also brings harm to christians here.

### Words that lead us forward:

Let us draw our mission terms from biblical concepts. Let us use words like *family, relationship, love, welcome, embrace, reconcile, hope, serve, peace with God, promoting justice, offering gifts of life and blessing.*

### Signatories:

*Rev. Richard Howell, General Secretary of the Evangelical Fellowship of India*

*Dr Augustine Pagolu, Honorary Secretary of the Theological Commission of the Evangelical Fellowship of India.*



# LIFE TOGETHER: THE REAL MEANING OF THE CHRIST EVENT

Rev. C.I. David Joy \*

Today life is under serious threat due to the visionless development of the nations and the greedy and selfish approach of the people. While celebrating yet another Christmas, atleast this question must be asked, "Who is Jesus for us? What change can he make in this world of turmoil and chaos?". While taking the characters of the first Christmas seriously, one essential dimension becomes clear that there was ample space for a community, or a life together. The scope of this essay is to underline the togetherness aspect of the Christ event in the midst of institutionalised individualism in our context.

The text selected for reflection is Matthew 2:6 *"And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah: for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people of Israel"*. This is an Old Testament quotation which is peculiar to Matthew [Mic.5:1.3; II Sam.5:2; 1Chro.11:2]. The text was added to the gospel with a clear community purpose. The intention of the author was not simply to anchor the events of Jesus's life in history, but to show that it was part of God's saving purpose for his people. By using these Old Testament passages, Matthew had indeed related infancy story and the wider Christological significance.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer's affirmation on Christology for today in terms of life together expression indeed refers to the Matthean understanding of Christ based community. After the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, there was a conflict within Judaism and a debate over the issue of the legitimacy and identity of the Jewish groups. At the same time Matthean community was searching for real and powerful traditions for their sustenance. The community, which was a reconstructed one, was really rooted in Christ. So the purpose of the Old Testament quotations are very clear and sharp as they liked to rely on the continuity of the saving act of God.

We, the Christians of the twenty first century who search for a possible presentation of Christ in order to contextualise the message of Jesus, should be able to project the life together aspect, as many have done, in the midst of problems and issues. Matthew very carefully presented the characters in the infancy narratives and interestingly all of them are community characters: the Magi, the parents of Jesus, Herod and his power, mothers of the killed children, people of Judae etc. A more meticulous study will certainly bring out more significant characters. However I would like to see the community values and dimensions manifested here in order to project the life together as-

pect of the Christ event.

The text Mt.2:6 refers to a ruler. The marginalised ones in the time of Jesus were indeed anticipating the coming of a ruler and a just rule by the ruler. There is a lot of connection between the ruler's essential characters and King David. And that connection is more powerful than any other messianic titles. The relationship between King David and Jesus Christ is strongly emphasized by Bonhoeffer. Sometimes it seems that both persons are completely identified with each other. Christ was in David, as flesh and as promise in David and David was his witness. This indicates the "in Christ" experience. This experience is the real meaning of the Christ event as this leads to a community life even in the midst of "weeping for children", "loud lamentation", "fleeing to Egypt" [Mt.2:13-18]. All these happened due to the absence of a proper order based on justice and peace.

This is much more than our traditional understanding of spirituality and christmas. In a season like Christmas, we need to open our minds and ears to be sensitive toward the cries and lamentations of the people. In Palestine innocent local people are being uprooted. In Bihar, many Adivasis and dalits are being brutally massacred. In Srilanka, the ethnic minorities are being killed. What is our response? And how

---

\* Lecturer, United Theological College, Bangalore



do we present Christ for today to them?

Matthew presents the promise of a just ruler in order to kindle the interest of the people and urging them to hope against hope! Matthew is not reinterpreting the scriptures but citing them to interpret the actions of Jesus and that was his contextualisation. No stagnant community can survive or address the issues posed before them. So a community

should be dynamic in accepting the faith and witnessing to what has been given. We are given a very unique gift "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" [Isa9:6b]. The Matthean Church took the message very seriously and sincerely and tried to "live in Christ". It was a life together experience. Jesus' power and authority are the foundational elements of our hope in this world.

And we are trying to build together for the sake of the Kingdom of God. Shall we help ourselves and others to experience and receive the Kingdom of God? Then the 'minor rulers' [Mt.2:6] will be the major players in this world like salt. Without hiding ourselves in the self created shelters, let us meaningfully part-take in the process of doing justice and peace.



**The Officers of the Synod and all the directors and staff of the secretariat and the South India Churchman wish you all a very merry christmas and a very bright New Year 2001.**

#### **DHARMA JYOTHI VIDYA PEETH, DELHI**

(Dr.Alexander Mar Thoma Centre for Theological and Developmental Studies)

#### **APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION**

Applications for admission to Dharma Jyothi Vidya Peeth for the year 2001 - 2002 are expected to reach the undersigned before February 28, 2001. Applicants should have a deep commitment to Jesus Christ and willingness to serve the cause of the Kingdom of God in the villages of North India. At the end of two years, the course offered at Dharma Jyothi Vidya Peeth will lead to a diploma in theology and development and later to the B.D. degree of serampore University.

Young men with a minimum qualification of plus two pass of a recognised educational institution only need apply. Few scholarships are available. They will have an interview prior to finalising the admission.

**For further details contact:**

**Rev.Dr.K.V.Mathew**  
**Principal, Dharma Jyoti Vidya Peeth,**  
**C/o. Mar Thoma Diocesan Centre,**  
**26, Bhai Vir Singh Marg,**  
**Gole Market, New Delhi - 110 001.**  
**Phone: 3342828 Fax: 3348800**  
**E-mail >mtdioces@ndb.vsnl.net.in<**



# HOMAGE TO A GURU

Bishop Samuel Amirtham (Rtd)

While I was a student at the United Theological College, Bangalore, there was one thing that impressed me most, and gave me a decisive value for life. Indianisation of leadership was in the air those days. Missionaries were handing over responsibilities to Indian colleagues. Dr. M.H.Harrison handed over principalship to his former student and chose to work with and under him. That ministry is readiness to give up influential positions, as well as willingness to work in new situations, and that covetable positions need not be held on to life-long periods were indelible lessons learnt then. At the Tamilnadu Theological Seminary, where I was the first principal, voluntary change of principalship has become an accepted tradition by now.

That Chandran taught different subjects from Western Philosophy to Johannine Writings, from Indian Philosophy to the History of Christian Thought impressed us a lot. His simple lifestyle - He would go by his bicycle for shopping to the Russell Market every day (The former principal had the use of a car) - was equally impressive on our young minds. The walks with him around the college lawn were precious moments. That he was so readily available to students in those early years was still more

impressive. Later, at the time when I became a teacher at UTS, and when he was engaged in ecumenical work, involving much international travel, and would 'occasionally visit the college' the joke used to be the prayer, "Lord protect and keep our principal wherever he is, for You alone know where he is now!"

Chandran was an exciting, though demanding, teacher. Even the best of us could not cope with his reading assignments. He would break his lectures and give time for questions and clarifications. He was also a challenging preacher. I remember his sermons on 'new humanity' bringing to the community, the implications of the current ecumenical debate. Some of the sermons were a bit 'beyond' our little heads, but that only enhanced the halo around the preacher, for everyone agreed that "today's sermon was highly theological!".

Vicky Chandran was the mother, rather, *akka* (elder sister) to students away from home, and sometimes even the 'oarackete' between the students and the principal. Her famous soups came to the rooms of sick students and there were rumours that some of the spoiled ones fell sick just

for the sake of the soup.

James Russel Chandran died in the CSI Hospital, Bangalore on 27-9-2000, leaving behind his wife, Victoria Chandran, his children Vijaya and Prem and their families now in USA and UK respectively. He was 83. They were all able to be present at the funeral.

Hailing from Muttada near Ananthapuri (His parents had moved here from Maramkuzhi in K.K.Dist, he was a pastor in the South Kerala diocese of the CSI. He started his ministry as a probationer in the Kodankara church. As he was an outstanding student, he was invited to be on the faculty of his Alma Mater.

By his creative thinking, and efficient administration, he soon became the principal of college and the ecumenical representative of the CSI in various global bodies. The Guardian of Madras described him then as a rising Indian star in the ecumenical horizon. He was soon elected to be one of the vice-moderators of the World Council of Churches, and served the ecumenical movement with his passion for unity and mission of the church. He was active in the christian peace conference and the East Asia christian conference, later, Christian Confer-



ence of Asia. He was instrumental in founding the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians, a forum for creative Third World Christian thinking and dialogical interaction with First and Second World theologies. He was the founder-president of the Christian Union of India in which capacity he gave public expression to political concerns of the Indian church and society. He also pleaded for the indigenisation of the total life of the Indian church, its worship and work.

Many generations of pastors, some of them, bishops, professors, and administrators to day, and theologians in India and abroad looked up to him as their *guru*. He gave them a global vision of the

church and humanity. His *Sashtiabdapoorthi (60th year)* Festschrift, *A Vision For Man* would have been titled A Global Vision, if the gender equality in language which many swear by today had come into our conscientizing process in 1976.

While Chandran was a student at UTC in the forties, he and his friends were caught up in the national freedom movement. He discarded the cotton suit of his days and began to wear the Travancore *Jibba* and *Veshti*. He changed his name from J.C. Russel to J.R.Chandran. So I.R.G.Harrison became I.R.H. Gnanadhason, later the Moderator of CSI. I have heard that so the names, Inbanathan, Arangadan, Samartha etc.

came to be too.

This was only symbolical of greater things to come. Chandran and his friends courageously used categories of *Advaita*, *Visishtadvaita* and Indian philosophical concepts to express and explain christian doctrines like, sin, salvation, eternal life, divinity of Christ etc. In his writings, sermons and talks he interpreted the christian sacrament of baptism as a sacrament of inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness. It is the sacrament of identification with sinners (the sinned against) and the marginalised, he used to emphasise.

Dr.Russel Chandran has been very influential in the formation of my values, life's perspective and theological thought. So will claim many of his *sishyas*.



## Suvartha News

THE ZONDERVAN

### PASTOR'S ANNUAL 2001

#### *Pre-publication Offer 40% Discount*

#### **A Planned Preaching Programme for a Year**

- A Storehouse of Practical Help • Morning and Evening Services for Every Sunday in the Year • Sermon Topics and Texts Fully Indexed (160 topics) • Definitive and Usable Sermon Outlines
- Devotionals and Bible Studies for Midweek Services • Fresh and Applicable Illustrations • Appropriate Hymn Selections
- Special-day Services for Church and Civil Calendars
- Meditations on Lord's Supper Observance • Wedding Ceremonies and Themes • Funeral Messages and Scriptures • Basic Pastoral Ministry Helps • Messages for Children and Young People • Offertory Prayers

432 Pages, Demmy 1/8 size, Publishing in India by

**Suvartha Bhavan, Thiruvalla, Kerala,**

**Publishing by Dec.20th, Price Rs.195/-**

Send Rs.120/- Postage Free

Outstation cheque add Bank Commission Rs.20/- Only limited copies will be printed. Reserve your copies by sending a post card

**Rush your orders to Suvartha Bhavan**

T.K.Road, Thiruvalla PIN 689 101

## THE ZONDERVAN 2001 PASTOR'S ANNUAL

### *An Idea and Resource Book*

- A Planned Preaching Program for a Year
- Morning and Evening Services
- Complete Sermon Outlines
- Applicable Illustrations
- Appropriate Hymn Selections
- Bible Studies for Midweek Services
- Messages for Special Occasions

T. J. Crabtree



# CHRISTMAS MEDITATION

ST.MATTHEW 2:1-18: STAR, PLAN, DREAM AND VOICE

Rev. Dr.Jesudasan Basker Jeyaraj

Christmas is celebration of a historical event. Carol services, carol rounds and christmas parties are part of it. Some of these programmes declare the Good News of the birth of Jesus as the Saviour of the world. But often these programmes are just routine celebrations. Two significant contributions, however, happened over the years due to these celebrations. Many new songs were written in regional languages and sung in the carol services. The creativity of writing new carols and choruses in our own languages rather than depending on the western carols and choruses in our own languages rather than depending on the western carols and pop music is to be appreciated and encouraged. Of course we still love the western songs like 'Noel' 'Mary's Boy Child' 'Silent Night' 'Jingle Bells' and sing during the festive season - may be to express our historic connection with the western mission.

Another significant contribution was raising money for charity and missionary work particularly to construct churches, schools or hospitals in the villages and among the tribals. Having received the Gospel, on the one side we express our faith through these celebrations and, on the other side our gratitude to God and concern for the needy. So we send greetings and give gifts to

friends and relatives and donate clothings, utensils and food to the poor. But the first christmas gave rise to unhappy events. Hundreds of children were murdered in Bethlehem because of the ruthless rule of Herod. And very often we ignore this tragedy and fail to remember those victims and their families. We fail to condemn such cruel action of Herod and the contemporary rulers in our songs and preachings. To include such a social dimension, many think, is presenting the negative side of the Gospel. But they fail to understand that the Gospel emerged out of socio-political and economic context. The birth of Jesus shook Herod.

Already the Jewish community in Judea rejected him to be their king because of his Idumaen blood and objected to his policies such as appointing and controlling high priest of his own choice, neglecting Hasmonian family, pleasing always the Romans, supporting the cult and philosophies of Greeks and Romans, murdering all the suspects who were a threat to his rule and his immoral life. Herod was afraid that his unjust and oppressive rule will be over. The advent of Christ has a political significance - challenging and ending unjust rule and administration and establishing and spreading the values of the Kingdom of God.

## 1. Star with a message

Matt.2:1-3 tells us that wise men from the East came to Jerusalem seeking the new born king of the Jews because they had seen his star in the East. This reveals that the birth of Christ (Messiah) is not exclusively for the Jews but it has a universal significance. Jesus Christ is for everyone although born in Palestine. That is why their coming to worship him is narrated in the Gospel; the wise men came all the way from the East to the Middle East to acknowledge Jesus by worshipping him. While their motive was good, their assumption that a king should have been born in the palace only was wrong. They believed that such a child should have been born in the royal family and in the palace. Their question: 'Where is he who has been born of the Jews?' disturbed Herod, the king of the Jews who was on the throne and 'all Jerusalem'. The phrase 'all Jerusalem' cannot refer to all the Jews who in fact were expecting the birth of the Messiah. For them it was a news for rejoicing. 'All Jerusalem', therefore, should refer to those who belonged to the royal family and the court. Usually the names of the capital cities are used in the Bible to refer to the ruling class in the country.(cf.Amos 1). Cities are centres of political and religious power. Matthew indi-



cates that the ruling minority in Jerusalem were also disturbed. They collaborated with the king in all his policies and actions and enjoyed the privilege of power and wealth. So they were also held responsible with Herod as implied in the text 'Herod was perplexed and threatened in his heart.' No king will accept another king rising in his own empire. He would feel that such an information was a threat to his position. Herod felt the same and could not accept someone outside his family rising as the king of Jews. He could not tolerate that this was happening without his knowledge outside his heritage. But he did not show his feelings to these wise men who were able to identify that particular star in the midst of millions of stars in the sky and interpret this sign with all their insight as referring to the birth of a new king.

## 2. *Plan of massacre (2:4-6)*

Herod acted immediately. He did not waste his time. He invited all the chief priests and scribes in his kingdom and consulted them about the birth of a king of the Jews. They quoted the prophecy of Micah 5:2 and told him that the ruler will come from the small town called Bethlehem. Matthew records that these priests and scribes quoted the prophecy of Micah and they did not interpret it. They also believed that God would raise someone from the tribe of Judah in the lineage of David to be their king and rule them again. They did not un-

derstand the new messianic role of the Messiah (Jesus) which will be different from the usual kingship. There was to be no set territorial boundary for this Messiah. His kingdom was to be kingdom of God and not of man. The values of this kingdom would be justice, peace and equality, welfare and sharing of power and resources and not accumulation of wealth, power and injustice. These religious leaders should have told Herod, that the ministry, message and life style of the new king would not be like the usual kings they had before. Because they did not have this perspective, they failed to interpret and explain the prophecy to Herod. Their misunderstanding of the prophecy misled Herod. Religious leaders can misguide political leaders if their values and perspectives are wrong. Both scholarly knowledge as well as superficial knowledge are dangerous if such a knowledge cannot have proper understanding, perspectives and godly values for the entire creation. Politicians seek the help of religious leaders to achieve their own purposes and strengthen their own position and power. This is what happened in the last political election. If these *pundits* had given a little bit of a clue that the messianic person is not in the line of worldly king, Herod might have postponed the massacre and sought more details. Herod was now sure that a rival king was rising up. Wise men's observation of the sign in the sky and religious leaders' quoting

the prophecy confirmed that a child was to be born in Bethlehem to become the king of the Jews. His consultation with the priests and scribes paid him off. Herod never told these leaders what he would do to this new born king. Atleast the religious leaders should have been suspicious of the approach of Herod and looked at his enquiry critically and warned the Jewish community of a possible genocide.

## 3. *Dream of Warning (2:7-12)*

The next move of Herod was to identify the child in Bethlehem. He wanted to do this shrewdly through the wise men so that he could eliminate that child alone. He wanted to be so sure about the identity of the child. He sought the co-operation of the wise men to identify the child and inform him so that he could also go and pay respect to the new king. This was a political glib talk and sure hypocrisy. No ruler would be willing to submit himself to another rising leader for the same people. Every effort would be taken to eliminate the rising new leaders. This is the politics of power, authority and greed. These wise men were such great experts to identify the star and interpret this as a sign of birth of a new king but they were not wise enough to understand Herod's political lies and hypocrisy. Believing him, the wise men agreed to give their full co-operation to Herod so that he might also go and wor-

(Contd. on page 19)



# Faith And Social Action

## CHURCH OF SOUTH INDIA

### TO REDEEM THE PLEDGE

Conscious and deeply concerned by the depths to which civilized and humane existence had sunk to in various nations, the General Assembly of the United Nations, in recognition of the inherent dignity of the individual proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948. The document strongly emphasizes the value of Human Rights in our development both as individuals and societies.

As we approach the 52nd Anniversary celebrations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we are aware that there exists a wide-gap between the rhetoric of Human Rights and the present reality. Contemporary stories of blood-baths be it in Kosovo, East Timor, Myanmar, Rwanda, Burundi, Bosnia, Sri Lanka....have quashed all basic premises of the Rights. And neither can we be silent over the carnage by Kashmir militants even if carried in the name of independence or by ULFA for a sovereign Assam or by Naxals in the name of a

just, equal society. A brute state and militancy are two sides of the same coin.

In India, we face yet another grim scenario on the domestic front as well.

More than one-sixth of India's population, some 160

many Indian states remain completely segregated by caste.

Despite the fact that "untouchability" was abolished under India's constitution in 1950's the practice of "untouchability" - the imposition of social ostracism on persons by reason of their birth in certain castes - remains very much a part

of rural India. "Untouchables" should not cross the line dividing their part of the village from that occupied by higher castes. Using of the same wells, visiting the temples, drinking from the same cups in tea stalls, or laying claim to land that is legally theirs are forbidden.



*An appalling view of migrant dalit settlement*

million people, live a precarious existence, shunned by much of society because of their rank as "untouchables" or **Dalits** - literally meaning "broken" people - at the bottom of India's caste system. Dalits are discriminated against, denied access to land, forced to work in degrading conditions and routinely abused at the hands of the police and of higher-caste groups. In what has been called India's "hidden apartheid", entire villages in

Most Dalits continue to languish in extreme poverty, without land or opportunities for better employment or education. With the exception of a minority who have benefited from India's policy of quotas in education and government jobs, Dalits are relegated to the most menial of tasks, as manual scavengers, removers of dead animals, leather workers, street sweepers, and cobblers. Dalit men, women, and children numbering tens of millions work as

**In Faith... With People.....**

*1. (Broken People, Human Rights Watch 1999)*

**CSI Diaconal Ministry**



agricultural laborers for a few kilograms of rice or Rs.15 to Rs.35.

Dalit women have to face the triple burden of caste, class and gender. Girls from the families have been abused by upper caste patrons and village priests. Sexual abuse and other forms of violence against women are used by landlords and the police to inflict political "lessons" and crush dissent within the community. Dalit children make up the majority of those sold into bondage to pay off debts to upper-caste creditors.

Dalits who dare to challenge the social order have been subject to abuses by their higher-caste neighbors. Dalit villages are collectively penalized for individual "transgressions" through social boycotts, including loss of employment and access to water, grazing lands and ration shops. For most Dalits in rural India who earn less than a subsistence living as agricultural laborers, a social boycott may mean destitution and starvation.<sup>1</sup>

*When we are working, they ask us not to come near them. At tea canteens, they have separate tea tumblers and they make us clean them ourselves and make us put the dishes away*

*ourselves. We cannot enter temples. We cannot use upper-caste water taps. We have to go one kilometer away to get water...when we ask for our rights from the government, the municipality officials threaten to fire us. So we don't say anything. This is what happens to people who demand their rights.*



*A view of a dalit house, Kilanjunai, Madurai*

*- A Dalit manual scavenger,<sup>2</sup>*

One in every three **women** in the world has been beaten or **abused** in her life according to the shocking revelation made by the Medical communications Network, New Delhi. What is perhaps more shocking is that often the abuses are from a male member of her own family. Had an employer, a neighbor, an acquaintance committed the offence, he would not have gone unchallenged. One's own kith has a different equation and can easily make an escape. However the fact remains gender -

based violence is probably the biggest abuse of Human Rights.

It is an accepted fact that women suffer. Silently. Patiently. The courts entertain cases of 'bride burning' not bride/wife battering. Though there are laws to ensure legal rights they are seldom enforced to punish abusers. Beliefs, norms and social traditions legitimize and perpetuate violence against women. Female infanticide, foeticide and unfair practices like the *devadasi* system all proliferate from this age old discrimination against women.

There are over 700,000 women who have been elected to

Panchayats in our country. Given the patriarchal nature of the Indian society it is not astonishing to find spouses always there, working first for the election of their wives and then officiating from behind the scenes. There is plenty of evidence of 'proxy representations of husbands and other male relatives who not only canvass for their women but also receive notices and attend meetings in their place.'<sup>3</sup>

India's attention has come to be focussed on the 33 percent reservation in parliament and

2. Human Rights Watch Interview, Ahmedabad Dist. Gujarat, July 1998. 3. Ms. Nirja Gopal Jayal, JNU, New Delhi.



state Assemblies. More and more organizations even those who would protest against violence against women in the past are being politicized and concentrating only on reservations. No doubt an increased participation of women in the legislative field would help but it would be naïve to imagine that it will drastically improve the status of women.

Attitudes have to change. The male has to change. And this is a long haul.

*Parents wed 4 yr-old girl to a dog*

*Haringhata (WB), July 13th, 2000:*

*It was her 4th birthday, and her parents celebrated it by marrying her off. It was not just another child marriage, the groom was a dog. Anju, the youngest daughter of Subal Karmakar, was married off to a mongrel, belonging to her relative's family to "ward off an evil eye". (The New Indian Express)*

The communities today classed as "scheduled tribe" who call themselves as "adivasi" were once the major occupants of the great central belt of the Indian subcontinent, nearly 40 percent of its land area according to one estimate. Today they are a minority in these regions also losing most of their land and their livelihood to state control on one hand and immigrant non-adivasis on the other. Land-

alienation and displacement has rendered them as one of the most marginalised in India.

*"I fell at his feet begging him not to hack my pepper vines. To me, they are like my children. But he did not care", Soman, a young Kattunaicken Adivasi, told me. "Instead he (Rajamanickam, the forest ranger) screamed, and said, "I am giving you one month notice. Then I will come back and destroy even your huts. As long as I am here, not one of you Kuttunaicken dogs will be allowed to drink water or get electricity from here".*

*Soman lives in Chembakolly village, Gudalur taluk, the Nilgiris. An outsider would be outraged at the injustice done by the forest department in suppressing the adivasis' pathetic attempts at agriculture. Living in huts made of twigs and leaves, they are some of the poorest inhabitants. (Rampage in Gudalur valley, Ms. Mari Macel Thekaekara)*

According to 1991 census the major source of livelihood was self employment in agriculture (43 percent) and rural labour (47 percent). Although Adivasis own some land it is often hilly and in remote areas. Adivasi farmers with even moderate holding are poor. Today most of the districts in India where starvation deaths are reported from are not in the dry-drought prone areas but predominantly Adivasi regions..

Kalahandi in Orissa is one such example.

"Education is a human right with immense power to transform. On its foundation rest the corner stones of freedom, democracy and sustainable human development..... yet 130 million children in the developing world are denied this right - almost two thirds of them are girls. Nearly 1 billion people or a sixth of the world's population are illiterate - the majority of them are women". (Mr.Kofi Annan, Sec.Gen, UNO).

Illiteracy begins as a sad fact of daily life for millions of children who are more often than not, girls. The reasons are numerous. For girls their gender alone keeps them at home, locked in subsistence chores - or so isolated in the class room that they become discouraged and drop out. For tens of millions of children, girls and boys alike, **education** is beyond reach because they are full time workers, many toiling in hazardous and exploitative forms of child labour. It is an irony that we have conferred Bharat Ratna on Prof. Amartya Sen whose unique theory is that without universal, compulsory basic education no development is possible and yet we are doing nothing about it.

**Communalism** in recent times has given rise to a culture and climate of anti-minoritism, resulting in increasing intolerance. It is imperative that



the agenda on Human Rights includes a sustained fight against communalists.....for if communalism comes to the fore Human Rights will be suppressed.

"Long ago, we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full

measure, but very substantially" were the words of the first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in the Constituent Assembly on the midnight of August 14 - 15, 1947.

Have we done enough to redeem that pledge in terms of Human Rights of our compatriots?. And has our pledge to the

people of India that their Rights of Life, Equality and Dignity been redeemed if "not wholly, then "very substantially"?

The urgent challenge now is to redeem that pledge... before the very fabric of our country is torn asunder ..we cannot afford to stand aloof, be silent or neutral.

-Anne Rajkumar.

## Capacitating the People

A Workshop 'sensitizing and capacitating churches on issues of concern in Andhra Pradesh' was organized from 8th to 10th November 2000 at Jubilee Bhavan, Secunderabad. The participants were from all the six dioceses of Andhra Pradesh representing youth, women, presbyters and socio-economic board. 34 participants attended the workshop.

The challenges faced by women and children of AP, Understanding the struggles of the oppressed were the topics for discussion. Ms.Sukumar, a child development project officer from the government of AP was one of the resource persons.

The workshop provided an opportunity to discuss these areas of concern which further

could be developed when local congregations come together identify the problems and find the channels to express and re-

flect their faith.

The strategies or rather the spirit from within helped and motivated the participants to go back to the dioceses and in turn to sensitize their own congregations.

A training program on dalit ideology was conducted for the project officers of Tamilnadu region at rural theological institute, Madurai from 16-19 Oct, 2000.

The main objective of this program was to understand dalit ideology, movements, socio-economic and political status of dalits and the situation of dalit women. Dr.Dyanchand Carr, Rev.John Jayakaran, Rev.Mohan Larbeer and Mr.Vincent were the resource persons.- Sarah Karunakaran, Training

## Girls Tied to the Soil

The Pioneer, Delhi, Jan15, 1999. Cotton which grows in abundance in AP's black soil has turned out to be a bane for the states' girls. Girls as young as 8 are employed in Cotton fields mainly for cross pollination. The reason? Superstition says that only girls and only those between the ages of 8 and 14 are suitable for the purpose.

These young girls are exploited to the hilt as they get a measly Rs.10-20 per day for 8 to 14 hours of back-breaking work.

Rich farmers also use another ruse to exploit these people claiming to pay off the parents' debt, they make the girls work for an entire season without wages.

**Support the CSI Girl Child Campaign!**



*Participants at the workshop, Secunderabad*



ship the child. These wise men were able to read the signs of the sky but not the mind and intention of Herod. They needed a dream of warning and correction. We do not like dreams of warning and corrections. Today our leaders need dreams which can challenge their thinking, power and life styles. But they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod.

Here again, we notice how politicians use wise men, astronomers and scientists. For example, Hitler used scientists to produce bombs. Western political leaders manipulate intellectuals to produce reports in their favour, prepare economic policies in the name of economic growth to profit the rich, or produce deadly weapons in the name of protecting their nations from enemies and contributing to world peace. Wise people - scientists, economists and educationists need a dream and vision to discern the motives and policies of the politicians or rulers and a genuine heart for the suffering poor and the powerless. They must have the courage as these wise men not to obey the orders of the evil rulers or extend their cooperation to such rulers. Christmas is a challenge to wise men and women.

#### **4. Voice for challenge (2: 13-18)**

Matt.2:16 says that Herod was furious when he knew that he had been tricked by the wise men. He could not tolerate it anymore. He felt that he was

defeated in his plan. He felt so desperate and insecure. He did not want the plan to go out of his hand. He was not patient to identify the child of Mary and kill Jesus alone. He did not want any male child of two years old to escape and rise against him in future and become the king of the Jews. He used his power, authority and security force to carry out his cruel plan. He ordered his soldiers to go to the region of Bethlehem. A number of innocent children were murdered. This is the result of misuse of power and authority.

Matthew quotes a poetic metaphor in v.18 which is from the ancient Israelite tradition. Rachel, the wife of Jacob and the mother of Joseph and Benjamin is given prominence in Israelite as the female ancestor of Israel and represents along with Jacob the entire twelve tribes. She died weeping at the time of giving birth to Benjamin and buried on the way to Bethlehem. Israelites believed that Rachel not only wept for her children but also for the generations of Jacob as a true mother concerned about the descendants. She represents all the mothers of Israel who lost their children in battle conflicts and calamities.

Jeremiah uses this metaphor in 31:15-17 to say to Israel that mourning of the mothers will change into joy since they would see their generation returning from exile in Babylon. But Matthew is not using the metaphor to comfort the people but goes back to the tradition of

Mother Rachel weeping for the generations of Israel. He uses the metaphor of Rachael to represent all the mourning mothers of Bethlehem at the death of their sons. Today, Mother Rachel, although belonging to Jewish tradition, represents all the mourning mothers of the world particularly Arab Palestine, Jaffna, Vietnam, Ethiopia, Rwanda who are losing their innocent children due to war, conflicts and calamities. Even today, genocide, racial and ethnic violence, wars and mass killing are happening because the people who are in position and authority misuse their powers.

The purpose of Matthew in describing the reactions and actions of Herod in the birth narrative is to show that the worldly authorities and evil powers are shaken by the coming of Jesus into this world. His birth, ministry, message and death and resurrection shook the principalities and powers of his own time. As we celebrate Christmas every year, we should not forget that the birth of Jesus moves us to criticize and shake the unjust rule at any cost. This is one of the aspects of the Good News besides forgiveness, reconciliation and eternal life. Christmas narrative in Matthew's Gospel reminds us what sort of help, cooperation we should extend to political authorities. We should not stop with carol services but should go beyond and raise questions regarding the relationship between religion and politics, science and politics, administration and authority to build a new society. ❁



## Sunday School Teachers' Certificate Course

For the first time in the history of our church a move has been initiated by the Department of Christian Education to secure a special recognition to the regular Sunday School Teachers at local, diocesan and synod level. In order to achieve this, the Sunday School teachers of each diocese are encouraged to participate in this certificate course. The salient features of this programme are:-

a. A certificate signed by the Synod and the Diocesan authorities will be issued to each participant in the form of a licence.

b. This is a paid course for the Sunday School teachers. They contribute Rs.50/- towards the Synod Sunday School Fund, Rs.20/- for the diocesan Sunday School Teachers Fellowship and Rs.30/- for the training costs.

c. By introducing the certificate course we aim to regularise the Sunday School Teachers ministry. The truancy of Sunday School Teachers is discouraged.

d. This certificate course will enable the teachers to become specialised in using the "Wings of Faith" curriculum.

e. And these certificate courses would motivate the Sunday School Teachers to form diocesan level Sunday School Teachers Fellowships for mutual encouragement and recognition. I plead with all the bishops to help us in this initiative.

A series of such courses have



*Licentiate Training programme in progress*

started in East Kerala diocese on 4-6, May 2000, in Rayalaseema diocese on 4-6, August 2000,



*Bishop Thavaraj awarding the diploma  
Tirunelveli diocese on 12-14,  
October 2000, Madurai-  
Ramnad from 27-29, October*

2000, Medak diocese from 17-19, November, 2000, Dornakal diocese from 23-25, November 2000, North Kerala diocese from 11-13, December 2000 and Madhya Kerala diocese from 27-29, December 2000.

## Synod Sunday School Missionaries

The Christian Education Department has initiated a missionary exchanges between the dioceses in terms of sending missionaries from one diocese to another diocese. East Kerala diocese

has sponsored a missionary couple Mr. Wilson and Mrs. Susy to work for 5 years in Dornakal diocese. Nandyal diocese has identified Mr. Thomas and Mrs. Mary to work in Nandyal diocese. These missionaries have a target of planting 250 new Sunday Schools in the diocese.

The Moderator the Rt. Rev. Dr. K.J. Samuel has blessed these missionaries during the Synod Working Committee sessions in the presence of the Rt. Rev. Vasantha Kumar, Rt. Rev. Dr. George Isaac, Rt. Rev. G.T. Abraham, Rt. Rev. Pothirajulu, Rt. Rev. Dorai and the General Secretary Rev. G. Dyvasirvadam on 13th October 2000.

*Rev.B.D.Prasada Rao*



## GROWING TENSION BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN IS THE CONFLICT POLITICAL, ETHNIC OR RELIGIOUS?

*The Rt.Rev.William Moses, Moderator-CSI (Retd)*

In spite of many efforts made by many great people particularly during the past one year, the tense situation between India and Pakistan continues to grow. Sri.Vajrayee the Prime Minister of India made an extraordinary visit to Pakistan last year by a bus journey(bus diplomacy) to develop a healthy relationship. Following it, recently the UNO with full strength of attendance made many suggestions to solve Indo-Pakistan problems. The Presidents of US and Russia visited India one after another in the last two months and had elaborate discussions with the political leaders of our country regarding the tense situation between the two neighboring countries in the subcontinents.

All these great efforts have not brought out any fruitful and visible results. On the other hand India's Home Minister Mr.Advani and the Defence Minister Mr.George Fernandes continue to make even stronger statements in all their public meetings preparing the people of India to be ready to face a major conflict, and also say that Indian Defence services are well prepared to face 'any eventuality.'

While more than 400 millions out of one billion people of our country are going through the sufferings of being below poverty line, the Government of India is diverting much of its re-

sources on defence expenditures with no returns.

On the first Independence day celebration in the new millennium when the whole nation was waiting to hear some positive statements from the leaders of our Government to eradicate the poverty situation of our people, the Prime Minister's Independence Day's prepared address concentrated more about Indo-Pakistan conflicting situation and calling Indians to be prepared to face the challenge.

In the recent past, to the great surprise of the Indian people our Government had four of its nuclear weapons delivery systems tested and also conducted nuclear explosions costing billions of rupees hoping that it would keep Pakistan under control. But within a few weeks Pakistan had five tests and tried to prove that they had equal if not greater capability in the nuclear arms.

The Government of both the countries have spent, out of people's tax money, several thousands of billions of rupees on these nuclear arms, all in vain. The Governments would have thought that these weapons would bring lasting peace, whereas, in reality these have brought in greater threat of much more serious nature.

Mr.Amartya Sen, the Nobel prize holder, in his article published in September *Frontline*,

a popular Indian magazine, had proved with many an eloquent point that the attempts to produce nuclear arms by the Government of India are both economically and ethically not worth it in today's situation. It would never help to bring peace in the subcontinent and on the other hand would only further increase the threat of serious consequences.

Therefore, at this state of great disappointment in the midst of increasing threats of war let us make one more attempt to study the root cause of the conflicts, past and present, for this kind of alarming situation, which is increasing day by day.

Six months ago, Mr.Bill Clinton, addressing the Inter-faith Religious leaders Meet at Washington, while making a very important statement, that the Indian subcontinent and the line of Control in Kashmir have become the most dangerous place in the world, has also raised a very serious question when he asked, "Is that an ethnic conflict or a religious one?"

The fifty year long conflict in the Middle East between Israel and Palestine is nothing but religious extremism.

In the last three or four decades of the 20th century, a large section of the christians in America engaged themselves in a strong hate campaign against



Russia. It was a conflict between the christian fundamentalists of America and the atheists of Russia. As a result both the Governments of US and USSR started their arms race particularly piling up of their nuclear arms. This kind of fundamentalist propaganda was exploited both by the politicians and the industrialists. Arms producing industries (private sector) have become the most flourishing business in America in the last 30 or 40 years of the 20th century.

Now, with the disintegration of USSR the conflicting situation in the west is no more there. A careful study of the western situation today gives clear indications that the west will have no more wars. But then, there is no remarkable reduction of arms productions in America and Europe. Where are these weapons and related war equipment marketed? Their markets are in Africa and Asia. The World bank, influenced by western powers, is giving liberal loan facilities even to buy the weapons by these poor and broken countries on credit. The battlefields are now shifted from the west to the African and Asian continents.

The forty year old conflict between the Sinhala and Tamils in Sri Lanka is not ethnic or language but religious problem according to the President of Sri Lanka Mrs. Chandrika Kumaratunga who had an hour long discussion with me and the local bishop a year ago.

Mrs. Chandrika, in fact is happy to have a delegation of peace loving religious leaders from India (Hindus, Buddhists, Christians and Muslims) to visit Sri Lanka and have a dialogue with the religious leaders in the island in order to find a solution to the long drawn conflict which has been a serious hurdle in the development of the island.

It is therefore proved beyond any doubt that religions have become the root cause of all these conflicts, particularly in India. Does it mean religions are bad and religious people do not want peace and want to fight? No! It is not so.

All religions teach peace and all religious people of all faiths long for peace. "Blessed are the peace makers for they are the children of God" is the main theme of Jesus' teaching. According to St. Paul, Jesus Christ had entrusted to the church the ministry of Peace and Reconciliation. Mahatma Gandhi, the father of our nation, had great love for *Bagavad Gita* among all the Scriptures, and after many years of meditation and study, had developed his philosophy or theology of 'Non-violence'. The basic and fundamental theology of Buddhism is also 'Non-violence'. The people of Islamic faith are very much committed to peace and reconciliation.

But very unfortunately among the people of the religions there are small sections of extreme fundamentalists, who, in the name of their religion

cause great damage to the people and to their own religion, by touching the emotional feelings of their religious sentiments.

Christian fundamentalists caused great damage to the whole world when they turned the American Government against Russia. Thank God it lasted only three or four decades and it is dying down. A small section of the Buddhist monks are responsible for what is happening in Sri Lanka.

Coming back to Indian situation, there is a concrete example of what has happened last month in Agra at the three days training of 40,000 *sevaks* of the RSS. Mr. Sudarshan, the Chief of the RSS (Hindu fundamentalist sect) while delivering the concluding address to the *Sevaks*, called upon all Indian christians and muslims in India to get themselves integrated or assimilated to Hinduism (*Hindutva*) or get lost. This was the main subject of the address. Our Home Minister Advani was very much present. If these two leaders of the RSS want to communicate their opinions to the Indian Muslims and christians they can call for a meeting of the leaders of these two religions. Why should this be the main subject at the training of the RSS *Sevaks*? The forty thousand *sevaks* of the RSS with semi-military uniform and long clubs in their hands were trained for three days, what is the ultimate goal of the training?

It is a fact that there are many



terrorist groups, trained in Pakistan in the name of Islam, cross the border and come into India 'to protect the people of Islamic faith'.

It is a well known fact, and no one can deny it, that 99.9% of the people of Hindu faith are peace loving and have great respect for the people of all faiths. Christians and Muslims in India are in no way less in their desire for peaceful co-existence of all communities of all faiths in India. Most of the Muslims are business people and they want peaceful environment to prosper in their business. Christians are trained and committed to serve others. Hence they do not want disturbance in their service particularly to the weak and suffering irrespective of caste and creed.

If all religions teach about

peace and reconciliation and if 99.9% people of all these faiths long to have peaceful co-existence and at the same time religions are the cause for the conflict particularly between India and Pakistan, why not the right thinking religious leaders meet together and work out ways and means for the settlement of the conflicts? Why not the leaders of the multi-religious India take the initiative? When India is blessed with many talented and extremely good religious leaders, particularly among the Hindu brothers and *gurus*, should we continue to keep silence?

There is no dearth of leaders of religions of all faiths in India and all of them have sincere desire for peaceful settlement of the long drawn conflict between India and Pakistan. There are equally good and faithful reli-

gious leaders in Pakistan.

We can no longer keep silent and stay in the background and leave the nation with one billion people into the hands of the politicians to play politics in the midst of the extremely serious and dangerous conflict situation of today.

It is time that the religious leaders of the majority religion of the Hindu faith take the initiative joining hands with the leaders of other religions.

Nothing is impossible when leaders of all faiths in India meet together and take sincere efforts to save the two nations from the military culture and the threat of war, so that the governments can divert their attention and resources towards meeting the basic needs of the voiceless masses who continue to live below poverty line.

#### Subscription Rates & Advertisement Tariff

Rs. 50/-	for	1 year
Rs. 140/-	for	3 years
Rs. 1,000/-	Life Member	
	ship	
Full Page	Rs. 750/-	
Half Page	Rs. 400/-	
Quarter Page	Rs. 200/-	

#### Festival Concert in Cassette!

We are planning to bring out a cassette of the **Festival Concert**. Please rush your enquiries and contributions to The director, Department of communication  
Phone: 852 1566

#### CONTENTS

Moderator's Christmas Message	1
-The Most Rev.K.J.Samuel	
Millennium Christmas	5
Rev.Jeyakiran Sebastian	
Life Together	9
- Rev. David Joy	
Homage to a Guru	11
Bishop Sam Amirtham	
Christmas Meditation	13
Prof.Jesudasan Jeyaraj	
Faith and Social Action	15
Growing Tension Between India and Pakistan	21
The Rt.Rev.William Moses	
Memoris of Kasam	24



# MEMOIRS OF KASAM

KASAM 2000 is a memory now. Over 2,250 youth from the 21 dioceses of the Church of South India along with their ecumenical colleagues both national and international enthusiastically participated in the **CSI SYNOD YOUTH FESTIVAL 2000** held at the serene village called Kasam in the diocese of Vellore from the 2nd to 5th of November, 2000.

The word Kasam literally means 'springing forth'. The great coming together of youth was intended to be a new spring of life; a new gushing forth of commitment, a new lease of channeling of energies, a new chapter in the dynamism of youth work, a new beginning in inter diocesan relationships, a fresh taste of ecumenical partnerships, a novel look at the challenges, struggles, dreams and visions of yet another generation in the pilgrim journey of the CSI. Kasam 2000 was all these, and much more!

**THEME:** Even as humanity tries ways and means of tackling violence the world over, the concept of peace, is a crucial concern today.

We live in a tiring and demanding situation where individuals are torn apart within. Young people travel through many a crisis and struggle.

Some are led into the world of violence, intoxication, drugs, lust, frustration and depression. What does peace mean to the individual? Families are being torn apart more. Domestic violence is on the increase. Much more than before, perhaps due to the trends of globalised economy and influence of globality, individualism is at its peak. Materialism and capitalism are tolling the knoll to communitarianism where the

the rise.

The frustration of the youth world is not without reason. Poverty continues to be an evil still unaddressed. Illiteracy and unemployment are still not considered as systemic deficiencies. Even when human dignity is publicly violated, there is an appalling silence and inaction. All the four estates, the legislature, the judiciary, the executive (including policing) and the press

leave much to be desired. If young people are being forced into extremism and if violence is creeping into our schools and colleges, the whole society is responsible for it. The marginalised and oppressed people, despite their struggles for self-assertion, continue to be treated as 'lesser humans', the

plight of the girl child and the status of women in the power equations of gender has quite a lot of room for rectification, the search for peace is a challenging one here.

It is in this context that Kasam 2000 discussed the theme, 'LORD MAKE US CHANNELS OF YOUR PEACE'. The theme had dynamic possibilities. Each one, whether an individual or a community, had a message for its own varying contexts.



*Youth swinging to the tunes*

market economy talks only of profit. The pain and agony of the victimised communities are more and more sidelined. In this context peace becomes very crucial here.

The forces of disintegration are much more at work today than every before. The widening gulf between many ethnic communities, growing assertion of fundamentalism and the attempts of fascism to search differences rather than commonalities among people etc., are on



### Why the coming together?

As the Scripture rightly points out, it is indeed joyful and pleasant for the children of God to dwell together in community. Kasam aimed at celebrating the community of one big family of the CSI, transcending boundaries of their local congregations, dioceses and regions, state, language and ethnicity, a new generation had to search for its right place in a much larger canvas of the Church's life.

Kasam was intended to be a time of knowing each other and building relationships, a building of a network that would have the potency to affect the very life and fabric of the life of the church in the days to come.

### What happened at Kasam

We had invited hundred young people from each diocese and all of them came. Some dioceses more and a few, less. Young boys and girls along with young pastors were there from all the twenty-one dioceses of the Church of South India. Ecumenical young partners from the Church of North India, Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church and other Churches and institutions joined us. There were also international youngsters from Bangladesh, Germany, the Netherlands United Kingdom and America. Kasam was a small global village.

The Moderator of the CSI, the Most Rev.Dr.K.J.Samuel, in-

augurated th Youth Festival at a solemn function on 2nd of November 2000. The students of the College of Nursing pre-

church, a generation that personally witnessed the formation of the CSI.



*Volley ball match (women) in progress*

sented an invocation dance. The Bishop of Vellore, the Rt.Rev.Mahimai Rufus invited the young people to Vellore and welcomed them to Kasam. Twenty one Peace doves were set free in the specially prepared *Pandal*. As the Moderator lit the *Kuthu Villaku*, water gushed up from the fountain specially erected at the centre of the *Pandal* marking the new springs.

The Moderator, Bishop K.J.Samuel in his inaugural address challenged the youngsters to have a well-defined qualitative relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and with one another with a special concern for the needy and the marginalised. He reminded them that peace making though risky is rewarding. He urged the youth to have a holy pride on being part of the church. Mr.Frederick Williams the synod Treasurer then blessed the festival as a representative of the first generation in the

Rev.G.Dyvasirvadam, the General Secretary of the Church of South India, led the Bible studies at the Youth Festival. He spoke on the wrestling of Jacob with God - the *peniel* experience, the transformation of Jacob the deceiver to Israel, the one seen of God. As *Peniel* was a life changing experience for Jacob, Kasam should

be a transforming experience for the youth movement of the CSI in general and each youngster present in particular, he asserted. He also called upon the young people to shout out in joy. Referring to the experiences of Isaiah 58, he exhorted them to delight in the nearness of God, to flee from the exteriority of religiosity and to understand religion as a deep inner experience, the real experience of God would be made manifest in our attempt to loosen the boundaries, to undo the bonds of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free and to break the very yoke.

True religiosity is to divide your bread with the hungry, to bring the homeless poor into the house and cover the naked. If a generation decides so, then light will break out there like the dawn, recovery will spiritually spring forth and righteousness will go before them and the glory of the Lord will be re-



vealed allowing an intimate experience and communion with the divine. The Lord will continue to guide you, satisfy your desire in scorched places, give strength to your bones and you will be like a watered garden, like a spring of water (Kasam) where water does not fail. He reminded the new generation that those from among them will rebuild the ancient ruins, will raise up the age old foundations and they will be called the repairer of the breach and the restorers of the streets in which to dwell.

The Rt. Rev. Dr. J. W. Gladstone gave the keynote address on the theme on a historic perspective. He enumerated the role of Christians in the struggle for liberation and affirmation of selfhood of oppressed communities in the centuries bygone.

The Rt. Rev. M. Durai, the Bishop of Coimbatore reiterated that unless there was a very personal encounter with Jesus Christ as the Lord and Saviour, any discussion on peace would remain at the peripheral level.

The host Bishop, Mahimai Rufus, held that, in today's society where humans were trapped in illiteracy, ignorance, oppression, injustice etc. peace with its extended meaning of reconciliation, becomes the deeply felt need of the hour.

The Communion Service celebrated with the Liturgy used at the Millennium Synod was an occasion where symbolically the paradigm shift of the Church's very being from a structure into

a movement of the people was clearly communicated.

The Rt. Rev. Jeyapaul David, Bishop of Tirunelveli, in his sermon said, wounds if treated on the exterior seldom healed, but when a knife worked through the wound cleaning the poison off in no time there was restoration.

The Chairman of the Youth Department, Bishop George Isaac presided over the whole session through sharp interventions, wonderful songs and dynamic guidance. He knew the psyche of the young people. He chastised with love and exhorted with passion and the young people just loved him and his beloved wife Mrs. Lily George.

A salient feature of the Festival was the singing and dancing. There was a special choir who led the singing time ably guided by the synod duo of Dorothy and Molly along with Timmy. There were quite a lot of opportunities for cultural presentations which the young people used for faith articulations and affirmations of their position on important issues. It was indeed a matter of great joy to watch the deaf, the blind and the lame, the rural and the urban, the literate and the illiterate contribute their mite to make the cultural presentations very colourful and meaningful.

The central focus of the conference was the Youth Commissions. The young people divided themselves into forty different interest groups to discuss in depth the various issues that they confronted in life. The

affirmations of the commissions were presented at the Youth Synod Session, which in turn formed the basis of the Kasam Manifesto/Declaration, which also included various resolutions raised on the floor.

There were also opportunities for the various department heads of the synod to present their visions and programmes of their departments. The campaign for the Girl Child and the CSI life support fund were powerfully presented and the offering at the Holy communion service (Rs.12,380/-) was given to the same.

The vellore diocese organised a very colourful Public Reception. Another major attraction of the Youth Festival was the sports and games conducted with such decorum, gaiety and fanfare. The Volley Ball tournament for men ended up with the Tirunelveli Diocese lifting the coveted trophy. The Throw Ball event for girls ended in favour of Karnataka Southern Diocese. There was a closely fought contest for the Cross Country race in which the North Kerala Diocese emerged the winner. What stood out conspicuously at the festival was the great effort put in by the diocese in meticulously planning out even the minutest details.

Kasam was indeed an inspiring experience for all who participated. They would continue to tell stories of Kasam for many more days to come.



## THE KASAM DECLARATION

We, the young people from the 21 dioceses of the CSI at our historic coming together at the Synod Festival 2000 in Kasam, Diocese of Vellore from 2nd to 5th of November, 2000 hereby solemnly reaffirm our faith in the Triune God, in Jesus Christ as the Saviour and Liberator of the entire cosmos and in the one Holy Apostolic and Universal Church.

We rededicate ourselves to truly be the Body of Christ - selfless, sensitive and revolutionary, to truly be the bride of Christ - blamelessly waiting for the bridegroom, the flock of Christ - to be led and guided by the Good Shepherd.

We do not want to conform ourselves to buildings and structures but while respecting the same we would want to transform them into a dynamic movement of young people, truly being channels of God's peace with a clear vision about what the community ought to be, where truth, righteousness, justice and love reign.

We praise the Lord for the great vision of our fore-parents to be a united and uniting Church, for the leadership of ten decades in the Church's ecumenical journey, while recognising that it would be our visions and dreams, our commitment and leadership that the

new generations would celebrate. We are overwhelmed and humbled at this thought.

We affirm that youth are not only the future of the Church but also its present. The young voices should be clearly heard in all the decision making bodies of the Church so that they become subjects in the life of the Church and not mere ob-



*Church leaders releasing the dove, symbol of peace*

jects. Relevant and meaningful programmes should evolve in each local congregation that would appeal to the young people. We commit ourselves to the same.

We affirm the centrality of worship in our lives and agree to the need of a life of prayer, bible study and community. The Orders of Worship used for the services must transcend being ritualistic readings, be contextual liturgies and should keep evolving. The participation of lay in the worship services must be made more concrete and visible and the very worship in its

content, music and cultural expressions must be made more indigenous and inclusive.

We acknowledge the need to maintain the sanctity of our sexuality and sacredness of the institution of marriage and family. There must be considered pre-marriage counselling for all the young people. The Church must take a very strong stand against social evils like dowry. Family enrichment and seminars must be initiated for healthy relationships within the family.

We acknowledge that casteism prevails within and outside the churches even today. There must be active steps taken to root out caste discrimination.

We affirm our solidarity with/as the marginalised and commit to struggle to eradicate marginalisation of all forms.

We affirm that poverty, unemployment and illiteracy are social evils and the Church should take concrete and decisive steps in dealing with these issues.

We realise the dangers of the impact of globalisation on the people in the peripheries and the recognised need to strive against the homogenisation of culture and to sustain the multiplicity of cultures. To ensure this there must be a network of young people for peaceful co-exist-



ence.

We affirm that corruption is a sin gnawing at the very fabric of the society. There are institutions where we see its evil face in the life of the Church also. We affirm to struggle against corruption and nepotism and never to be part of the same.

We acknowledge the tremendous contribution the Church has made in the areas of primary health and primary education. We are sad at the commercialisation of many of our institutions. We want the Church to reaffirm our commitment to the cause of primary education and primary health and to see that these are part of ministry and not channels for profit making.

We acknowledge that the young people must be sufficiently equipped to discern what the media project as facts. Our communication network must be strengthened to bring in awareness against discrimination against women, child labour, the different vices, evils of globalisation, etc., Folklore, street theatre, and other people's expressions must be strengthened.

We acknowledge the need for strengthening christian nurture, the programmes which should include a strong sense of social consciousness at the same time deeply rooting the young people in faith and scriptures.

We affirm that divisions within the Church are not part of God's original plan and there-

fore all attempts must be made to break the barriers that divide the christian community. The parish must be recognised as a geographical entity inclusive of all.

We affirm the need to respect the plurality of religions while being sure of the uniqueness of what we believe. Young people must be able to join hands with people of other faiths for struggle to affirm life and for peaceful co-existence.

The youth of the Church must strongly respond to all violations of human rights and as a community strive for the establishing of justice, peace and integrity of creation.

We affirm that as citizens of the nation, we must be active participants in all the political processes of democracy. The local congregational youth units should be a focal point in career guidance, crises, counselling and struggles for life.

We affirm our commitment to the cause of the girl child, gender justice, care for the elderly, care for the differently abled and care for the marginalised.

We affirm that each one of us are missionaries, living the living gospel of the living Lord and are thus channels of the Lord's peace.

## **RESOLUTIONS.**

1. Resolved to request all the CSI institutions to abstain from the evil practice of Capi-

tation and donations. Educational institutions should cease being business centres and should focus on serving the needy - specially the backward communities.

2 Resolved to request the concerned people that proper leadership training be given to youth including awareness on human rights violations, environmental hazards and health challenges. Conscientisation and awareness programmes be strengthened at grass root levels that they stop suffering discrimination as if it is their destiny.

3 Resolved to request the CSI that in all appointments and admissions of Church related institutions, active members of the youth movement of the CSI be given priority.

4 Resolved to request the CSI to start rehabilitation centres for the differently abled and socially ostracised in all the CSI dioceses along with pre-marital counselling centres and career guidance centres.

5 Resolved to strongly recommend electoral reforms in the democratic process of the church in a way that panel systems and groupism be done away with.

6 Resolved to request the concerned dioceses to encourage Indian music and musical instruments in our worship services and liturgies.

7 Resolved to affirm the



Indianness of the Church and to be prepared to challenge any attempt by fascist forces to claim the contrary.

8 Resolved to suggest that elections at the Synod level be held once in four years instead of two so that the elected people would have sufficient time to see visions and implement them.

9. Resolved to request all the local congregations to be actively participating in the liberative mission of the Gospel helping the Gospel to reach the poor, helping the broken hearted, liberation to reach the captives, recovery of sight to reach the blind and liberty to reach the oppressed.

10. Resolved to be prophetic voices in all the struggles against corruption and nepotism.

11 Resolved to request that conscientisation programmes be done at various levels to bring in awareness against intoxication and AIDS.

12 Resolved to request the Synod to conduct a Parents Festival - A celebration of the Laity of the Church.

13 Resolved to request the Synod to start a separate Jour-

nal for Youth specially concentrating on the creative talents of young people.

14 Resolved to request the Synod to allocate more funds to strengthen the regional and synodical network of young people. There must be inter-church and inter diocesan exposure programmes along with national



*A traditional welcome on the opening day*

and international exposure programmes.

15 Resolved to affirm our solidarity with the people of Kolar area who face displacement in the wake of the closure of the Kolar Gold Mines and to participate in their struggle for survival in whatever way is possible.

16 Resolved to recommend all the Youth units to abstain from the use of multinational products at least from our Church programmes, local diocesan, regional or synodical levels and to oppose radically all

anti ecological activities.

17 Resolved to affirm our solidarity with the suffering masses on the banks of the River Narmada who are being displaced by the building of the dam and to offer our support in all ways possible with the *Narmada Bachao Andolan*.

18 Resolved to encourage the youth movements to participate in the struggles of all people's movements for the affirmation of life.

19 Resolved to request the Marriage Questions Committee to come up with a strong response to the Proposed Indian Christian Marriage Bill affirming that marriage for us is not

just a legal contract but a Sacramental Covenant.

20 Resolved to request the Liturgy Committee to make the Liturgies more contextual and relevant.

21 Resolved to thank the Synod for all the encouragement provided to the young people very specially for the Synod Youth Department and the Synod Youth Festival 2000.

**-Rev. Vinod Victor**



## DALIT CONCERNS

### Perspective Building Programme for the Pastors and Lay Leaders at Kowthalam.

The venue of the programme - Kowthalam, spoke volumes about the plight and the dilemma of the Dalit Christians. Though Dalits of this region embraced christian faith they are still considered as untouchables by the majority community. The innumerable Government schemes

meant for Dalits are denied because they are Church members. Neither the Church has the resources to offer substantial economic gains to this 'twice' alienated community. Hence most of the village christians in Bellary and Adoni area of Karnataka Northern Diocese and Rayalaseema Diocese have become landless agricultural

labourers. As they are totally dependant on the Landlords for their day-to-day sustenance, they are subjected to blatant and inhuman caste discrimination.



*A session with the participants in progress*

During the sharing session innumerable cases of atrocities, intimidation, denial of rights were narrated. The group strongly expressed the need to re-kindle the struggle demanding reservation benefits for Dalit Christians as they suffer the same indignities. As children and the youth are the most hit among this community, the

group urged the synod through the diocese to initiate literacy programmes for child labourers, skill training for the youth. The group also felt the urgency to renew folk and cultural re-

sources of Dalits which could become an effective tool for liberation. The history of Dalit Christian struggles in the region as championed in the past by Rev.Simon and the like should be recorded for posterity - the group added.

The group also suggested that the Director of Department of Dalit and Adivasi Concerns should be given a mobile phone so that he could be contacted without difficulty in the event of attack on CSI Dalit congregations.

- Rev.H.Vedanayakam, CSI Rayalaseema Diocese

### A Pastor and the Members of CSI Congregation were attacked at Kanakaveedu Village

Turn Back You Madiga \*\*\* Community, How Dare You Walk on this Road!

It was Sunday evening (8.10.2000): The congregation members led by the Pastor Rev.K.Balaraju and the Divisional Chairman Rev.H.Vedanayakam gathered at the entrance of the village to receive a guest of honour. As

the CSI christians are considered untouchables they are expected to use the outer road of the village to enter the Church premises. Since this outer road was overflowing with sewage and rain water and filled with slush the congregation decided to enter the main street and reach the Church premises with the visiting dignitary. That's

when all hell broke loose. The upper caste men who were present there blocked the procession, caught hold of the Pastor's collar and pushed him aside shouting obscene curses and calling them by their caste name. The processionists did not put up any resistance instead, retracted on to the slushy outer road and reached





*Rastha Roko*



*The director, DDAC and Rev.M.Manohar, diocesan secretary, speaking to the congregation*



*Staging a dharma at the office of Mandal revenue officer, Yemiganur*



*Taking out a procession, at Yemiganur*

the Church premises.

The Dalit christian community at Kanakaveedu has borne innumerable attacks, threats of physical violence and intense caste discrimination in the past. But this is the first time that what the Dalit community holds as precious and sacred - their faith, has been attacked. That night the whole community gathered in the Church and decided to lodge a police complaint, - come what may. The neighbouring Dalit congregations rose up in

a remarkable way extending their support and solidarity to the CSI congregation at Kanakaveedu. As the police has delayed the arrest of the culprits, processions were taken out in the neighbouring Yemmiganur town and the 'rastha-roko' (halt the traffic in protest) were organized. The Director of the Synod Department of Dalit and Adivasi Concerns together with the Rayalaseema Diocesan Secretary Rev.M.Manohar and the Senior Pastors from the

neighbouring Karnataka Northern Diocese visited the village as a mark of their solidarity with the congregation at Kanakaveedu. As upper caste have boycotted hiring labourers from the congregation and the members are hit economically the Synod Department for DDAC was able to release a small grant to assist the congregation in their struggle for greater self-respect and equality.

*-Rev.K.Bala Raju.*



## PASTORS' PAGE

Greetings of Advent 2000. As we prepare to celebrate the first Christmas of the Millennium, pastors have the duty to teach the people the meaning of Christmas and the method of celebrating it. Failing in this would result in another ritual of Christmas festival. To engage the pastors in serious thinking of Christmas, the Pastoral Aid Department brings out the booklet, 'Advent Meditation 2000' on the theme 'God's Intervention'. This Meditation book has been sent to all the pastors by individual mail,

Sermon notes based on the themes of the 'Worship and Mission Commission' of the Joint Council of CNI, CSI and Marthoma church are ready. Copies of this will be made available to the pastors soon.

The East Kerala Pastors with their Bishop, Most Rev. Dr. K. J. Samuel spent October 2 - 4, 2000 at the CSI Centre for exposure and retreat. Rev. David Joy and the Synod Directors handled the

sessions, provoking meaningful discussion on the theme, "Cross: The Continuing sign of Hope". The city tour gave a good exposure and orientation to the pastors.



Karnataka Regional Pastors Conference took place between 23 - 25 October 2000 at Dharwad. Thirty pastors from the three Karnataka Dioceses attended. *Relevant speciality for the New Age* was the theme for the Conference. Rt. Rev. Dr. P. J. K. Balmi inaugu-



rated the conference. Rev. Dr. Samson Prabhakar, Rev. Dr.

Hanibal Cabral, Rev. Prabhakara Rao and Rev. G. Devakadasham induced the pastors for deeper thinking into spirituality. The Regional meet provided the pastors closer fellowship.

More than 100 young pastors made part of Youth Festival at Kasam from 2 - 5 November 2000. Young pastors met separately to take stock of the life of the church and what best they could do to make qualitative improvement in the ministry.

Pastoral care and Counselling is one of the key areas in ministry. Our pastors need update training in Counselling. Forty pastors from Kerala Region had a workshop on counselling from 6 - 10, November 2000 at Santhagiri Ashram, Always.

Rt. Rev. Dr. George Isaac with mature experience in counselling organised a team of resource persons to do the workshop. All the pastors expressed great satisfaction over the workshop and proposed to have more programmes in future.

I wish you all my brothers in Christ a blessed Christmas and a meaningful ministry of the season.



## The Leprosy Mission India

**Requires Doctors for it's various hospitals.**

- > Medical Officer : M.B.B.S.
- > Surgeons : M.S. (General Surgery & Ortho Surgery)
- > Medical Specialists : M.D. (General & Community Medicine)
- > Dermatologist : M.D./Diploma
- > Gynaecologists : M.S.(Gynaecology)/Diploma

**Salary:** Commensurate with the qualification and experience (between Rs.18,000/- to 30,000/- per month for MD/MS).

**Benefits:** Non-Practising Compensation, Children's Education Assistance, Post-Graduate Allowance, Allowance for Technical Book, Rent-free accommodation with basic furniture, apart from Contributory Provident Fund, Leave/Home Town Travel Allowance, TLM Financial Assistance on retirement, Government Pension, Gratuity.

**Epidemiologist for NEPAL** on contract for maximum of 2 years and required to conduct skin test trials.

**Qualification & experience:** MSc (Epidemiology) with atleast 3 years of experience of a related nature. He or she must have actual experience in planning for & conducting skin test survey. If the candidate is also an MBBS graduate with leprosy experience, preference would be given.

**Salary:** Commensurate with the qualification and experience.

Interested candidates may apply within 15 days of publication, clearly mentioning contact phone/fax/E-mail:

**Director for south Asia  
The Leprosy Mission India,  
CNI Bhawan,  
16, Pandit Pant Marg,  
New Delhi 110 001.**

**Ph: +9111371 8261/63/64  
Fax: +9111371 0803**



**FROM THE MAKERS OF MEGASERIAL DAYASAGAR**

**BEAUTIFUL - EVERGREEN  
IMPORTED - REAL LOOK  
CHRISTMAS TREES**



RNI No. 1170/57  
Regd. No. TN/ChiefPMG/675/2000  
WPP No. 379  
Licensed to Post without prepayment

**ONE TIME PURCHASE - REUSABLE  
EASY TO ASSEMBLE & DISMANTLE  
EASY TO CARRY - EASY TO STORE  
WASHABLE  
2 FEET TO 8 FEET**

*Also*

**GARLANDS - WREATHS - SWAGS - HOLLIES  
LUSTROUS DECORATIONS  
OVER 100 VARIETIES**

*For more details and price list, write to*

**GOOD SHEPHERD**

No. 8B, Gangaianman Colony,  
Vadapalani, Chennai - 600 026.  
Ph. : 4725675 / 4725677 / 4727161  
Fax : 4720750 / 4721327  
e-mail : rcstudios@hotmail.com

**Also available :**

**'DAYASAGAR' Audio & Video cassettes of Film & TV Serial**

Printed by Mr. P. Thomas Barnabas at TN Offset Printers 130-E, Arcot Road, Valsaravakkam, Chennai - 600 087. (Tel: 486 9515) and published by the Rev. G. Dyvasirvadani, General Secretary - CSI on behalf of the CSI Synod, CSI Centre, 5, Whites Road, Royapettah, Chennai - 600 014. Editor: Rev.